

II

Jack. I wanted to be engaged to Gwendolen, that is all, I love her.

Algernon. Well, I simply wanted to be engaged to Cecily. I adore her.

Jack. There is certainly no chance of your marrying Miss Cardew.

Algernon. I don't think there is much likelihood, Jack, of you and Miss Fairfax being united.

Jack. Well, that is no business of yours.

Algernon. If it was my business, I wouldn't talk about it.

[Begins to eat imiffins] It is very vulgar to talk about one's business. Only people like stockbrokers do that, and then merely at dinner-parties.

Jack. How can you sit there, calmly eating muffins when we are in this horrible trouble, I can't make out. You seem to me to be perfectly heartless.

Algernon. Well, I can't eat muffins in an agitated manner.

The butter would probably get on my cuffs.

One should always eat muffins quite calmly. It is the only way to eat them.

Jack. I say it's perfectly heartless your eating muffins at all, under the circumstances.

Algernon. When I am in trouble, eating is the only thing that

consoles me. Indeed, when I am in really great trouble, as any one who knows me intimately will tell you, I refuse everything except food and drink. At the present moment

I am eating muffins because I am unhappy.

Besides, I am particularly fond of muffins.

[Rising.]

Jack. [Rising.] Well, that is no reason why you should eat

them all in that greedy way. *[Takes*

mitffins] from Algernon.

Algernon. [Offering tea-cake.] I wish you would have tea-cake

instead. I don't like tea-cake.

Jack. Good heavens I I suppose a man may eat his own muffins in his own garden.

Algernon. But you have just said it was perfectly heartless to eat muffins.

Jack. I said it was perfectly heartless of you, under the circumstances.

That is a very different thing.

Algernon. That may be. But the muffins are the same.

[He seizes the muffin-dish

from Jack.]

Jack. Algy, I wish to goodness you would go.

Algernon. You can't possibly ask me to go without having some dinner. It's absurd. I never go without my dinner. No